OTHER JURISDICTIONS - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

COMMUNITIES SURVEYED

- The following communities were directly surveyed:
  - Phoenix, Arizona
  - Little Rock, Arkansas
  - Huntington Beach and Temecula, California
  - Arvada, Boulder, Fort Collins and Golden, Colorado
  - Santa Fe, New Mexico
  - Eugene, Oregon

- Of the above, the following skateparks were visited:
  - Arvada, Boulder, Fort Collins and Golden, Colorado
  - Santa Fe, New Mexico

- Information is also included in Appendix I about 6 jurisdictions in northern California

KEY FINDINGS

Key Findings are based on the 10 jurisdictions directly surveyed/visited.

1. **The risk of exposure to liability litigation appears to be less than feared**. Despite the fact that all staff contacted are aware of injuries at their skateparks, including some that are serious, only two liability claims were discovered. In Arvada, Colorado, staff reports that the claim was dismissed because the city has a clearly posted "skate at your own risk" policy. In Golden, Colorado staff reports that the claim was filed in October 1996 and has not yet been resolved. The accident in Golden was to a BMX biker who fell on a half-pipe and seriously injured his mouth and jaw. The equipment is four years old and a site visit revealed that it was in poor condition.

   (Of the six communities in northern California, there is one reported liability claim and it was quickly settled.)

2. **All communities in this sample are very happy with their decision to build skating/biking facilities** and they encourage us to do the same. In most places the skatepark is accessible to public transportation. There is general agreement that skaters will take the bus to the nearest stop and/or skate to the park. They are also transported to the park by their parents and driving age friends. In Boulder, Colorado there is some evidence that visitors to the park include people who deliberately plan their vacation trips to stop at the skatepark.

3. Virtually all jurisdictions agree that **it is essential to the success of the skatepark that skaters and bikers be intimately involved in the planning and design of the facility.**

4. **Facilities should be planned to be larger than the estimated need** because typically, despite best efforts, the level of need is unknown. In Arvada (population 104 thousand,) for example, staff was astonished to discover that at least 1,500 skaters use the facility on a summer weekend.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SKATEPARKS

Each jurisdiction surveyed was asked about their biggest problems. Based on the frequency of response, following is a rank order list of the problems reported:

1. **Graffiti.** The biggest target for graffiti is the wood frame used to support half-pipes, quarter-pipes and other free-standing ramps. The smooth metal and concrete skating surfaces are also tagged, but the graffiti gets rubbed out very quickly by the action of the skate wheels on the surface. Most staff think that it is not the skaters who tag the facility. This opinion is borne out by discussions with the skaters who, without exception, were obviously grateful for the facilities they had been given.

2a. **Facility not big enough.** Consideration should be given to the fact that skaters come from perhaps 25 miles away, or more, to use the facility. This observation was borne out by discussions with the skaters. At each location visited there were skaters from outside the community. Because the facilities tend to be smaller than the demand requires, skaters must wait for their opportunity to use the equipment. CoA staff were pleasantly surprised and impressed by the consideration skaters showed to one another while they were using the facilities. This observation was true for both the supervised and unsupervised facilities.

2b. **Maintenance of wood framed equipment and steel skating surfaces.** There are three types of maintenance related problems.

- Inclement weather, the repeated need to clean graffiti, and the vibrations generally associated with use tend to cause the equipment to deteriorate.

- Skating surfaces on most free standing ramps, and on half and quarter-pipes are typically made of steel. The vibration associated with use tends to lift the surface from the frame. Careful and frequent maintenance will prevent a hazard from developing. Initial purchase of factory rolled steel also seems to help reduce overall maintenance.

- The steel skating surface gets hot. To minimize this problem, the surface is typically painted a light blue that has been shown to do the best job of reducing the heat. Paint, however, must be renewed fairly frequently.

3. **Skaters are messy.** Most jurisdictions report an increase in the amount of trash that has to be cleared.

4. **Other problems** reported included: ineffective drainage in bowl shaped facilities causing water to stand at the bottom; underestimated need for parking; too few of the same skate feature in a single park; skate surfaces that are not smooth enough; unintended cracks in the concrete.